

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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SUBJECT: POST RELATIONSHIPS WITH AMERICAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

REF: (A) STATE 94266 (B) CAIRO 1585

1. QUESTION OF EMBASSY RELATIONSHIPS WITH AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND FORMATION OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO FURTHER USG AND AMERICAN BUSINESS OBJECTIVES HAS BEEN OF PRIORITY INTEREST TO US DURING PAST YEAR OR MORE. WE ARE PRESENTLY INVOLVED IN COOPERATIVE EFFORT WITH U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO ASSIST IN FORMING AMERICAN-EGYPTIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SEE REF B). VEHICLE OF JOINT AMERICAN-EGYPTIAN CHAMBER WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE OF POTENTIAL PROBLEM (NOTED PARA 3, REF A) OF POLITICAL SENSITIVITY TO ORGANIZATIONS OF U.S. CORPORATIONS. WHILE NOT AN IDEAL SOLUTION, WE BELIEVE THAT FORMATION OF JOINT CHAMBERS IN OTHER COUNTRIES MAY BE ONE APPROACH TO ORGANIZING AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY EFFECTIVELY WHILE AVOIDING OFFENSE TO LOCAL SENSITIVITIES.

2. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON ORGANIZATION OF JOINT CHAMBER, OCA SHOULD CONTACT JOHN BREWER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, EGYPT/US JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL AT U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

3. WE INTEND TO CONSULT WITH NEW AMERICAN-EGYPTIAN
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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, BOTH IN RREPARATION OF TRADE

PROMOTION PLANS AND IN IDENTIFYING OF AREA IN WHICH USG CAN MOST EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT LOCAL U.S. BUSINESS INTEREST.

4. AMB AND EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE MET FREQUENTLY WITH U.S. BUSINESSMEN, BUT MORE ON INDIVIDUAL THAN GROUP BASIS. MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH JOINT CHAMBER HAVE NOT BEEN HELD, FIRST BECAUSE UP TO NOW THERE HAS BEEN NO JOINT CHAMBER AND SECOND, BECAUSE WE HAVE NO ADEQUATE PLACE FOR SUCH A MEETING. AS DEPT. AWARE, AMB'S TEMPORARY RESIDENCE IS FAR TOO SMALL TO HANDLE REPS OF WHAT ARE NOW ABOUT 80 AMERICAN FIRMS FOR LUNCHEON OR ANY COMPARABLE SOCIO-BUSINESS SESSION. PUBLIC FACILITIES ARE TOO EXPENSIVE. WE HAVE CONSIDERED MEETING WITH SMALLER GROUPS OF BUSINESSMEN, BUT DO NOW WISH TO GIVE OFFENSE TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT INVITED. MOREOVER, GIVEN INTENSE POLITICAL DIALOGUE IN WHICH WE ARE ENGAGED WITH EGYPTIANS, THERE IS A LIMIT TO THE AMOUNT OF TIME SENIOR U.S. EMBASSY OFFICERS CAN AT THIS TIME SPEND WITH BUSINESSMEN. WE ARE LOOKING FOR A PLACE WHERE SUCH MEETING MIGHT TAKE PLACE IN AN ATMOSPHERE WHERE AMB CAN TALK FRANKLY WITH AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN AND, ON THEIR PART, PERMIT A CANDID EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITHOUT RUNNING THE RISK OF BEING OVERHEARD BY EGYPTIAN HOSTS. EILTS

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